PROGRESS REPORT

ON

THE TASK FORCE ON SENIOR CITIZENS HOUSING

CONDUCTED BY THE

SASKATCHEWAN HOUSING CORPORATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Public Housing

a) Administration

1. a) It is recommended that SHC establish a uniform standard of admission which can be applied consistently by all Housing Authorities, as there are variations in the admission standards among the Housing Authorities.	1. a) The Corporation held a three day Housing Authority Conference in Saskatoon to identify problems and issues raised at the various Task Force Meetings. In order to ensure consistent administration standards, the Corporation introduced a Comprehensive Housing Authority Administration Manual. The Corporation also scheduled a series of fourteen Regional Workshops to review eligibility requirements, interpret policies and procedures, provide management expertise and training, as well as to advise and participate in the establishment of District Co-ordinating Committees. The following is the schedule for these workshops: Weyburn-April 1/2 Carlyle-April 3/4 Swift Current-April 9/10 Moose Jaw-April 11/12 Humboldt-April 18/19 Yorkton-April 23/24 Melville-April 25/26 Kindersley-May 7/8 Regina-May 9/10 P.A. - May 13/14 N. Battleford - May 15/16 Nipawin-May 21/22 Saskatoon-May 23/24 Regina-June 5/6
b) It is further recommended that admission standards be based upon four criteria, in the following order of priority: age, income, degree of informity and present housing condition.	b) Introduction of a selection criteria point system which allows for a more objective and rational assessment process was included in the Housing Authority Administration Manual.

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c) It is further recommended that Public Housing be targeted to low income senior citizens, who should not be required to pay more than 25% of their income for shelter. Where vacancies in Public Housing units exist moderate income senior citizens should be allowed to occupy these units at reasonable market rates.

c) Rents in Public Housing for senior citizens are now based on 25% of a senior's income. This rent includes utilities, other than electrical and telephone. Moderate income seniors are allowed to occupy vacant units at rents based on 25% of their income unless this amount exceeds a market rent value.

2. It is recommended that SHC continue to encourage the development of senior citizen accommodation in small towns because seniors expressed the desire to remain in their own community with friend and relatives.

2. SHC is continuing to develop senior citizens housing in small communities. As many seniors have also stated a strong preference to the apartment style units, SHC has developed an apartment as small as eight units to accommodate seniors in small towns.

3. It is recommended that the community make a greater social and financial commitment to Public Housing projects, as the construction of a housing complex for the elderly should be part of a community effort.

3. With the development of Enriched Housing, communities are required to provide, organize, and fund many of the supplementary services to the tenants.

4. a) It is recommended that SHC expand its training programs for housing Managers and Board Members, specifically in the area of their responsibility to the residents and the project, as the Housing Managers and Board Members play an important role in the lives of the tenants.

4. a) During the Regional Workshops, Housing Authority managers and staff were encouraged to obtain the ARM designation (Accredited Residential Manager) and the CPM designation (Certified Property Manager). SHC is actively taking a lead role to ensure participation in these designated training programs to increase the professionalism of Housing Managers.

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b) It is further recommended that the role of the Manager be expanded to include co-ordination with other local service organizations and promotion of tenants' associations.	b) The participation of Managers and Board members in the District Co-ordinating Committees is being encouraged. As more District Co-ordinating Committees are established, this may become mandatory for the local Housing Manager.
b) Senior Citizen Participation	
5. a) It is recommended that seniors become more actively involved in the planning and management of accommodation for senior citizens, as they are most aware of the needs of the elderly.	5. a) Since the issuance of the Task Force Report, SHC staff have participated in numerous public and private meetings with senior citizens and senior citizen organizations.
b) It is further recommended that senior citizen participation be ensured by appointing at least one senior citizen to each Local Housing Authority.	b) Effective September 15, 1984, each Selection Committee was advised that they should endeavor to recommend at least one senior to the Board of Directors of the Housing Authorities.
6. The Task Force recommends that there be senior citizen representation on the Board of Directors of SHC.	6. This recommendation has been accepted with the appointment of Mr. Jim Maher who is an Engineer by profession and is presently the Mayor of North Battleford.
7. a) It is recommended that a counselling service for smaller projects be investigated, since the residents of small centres do not have access to the same level of support services as larger urban areas. Option for consideration should include the use of local volunteers.	7. a) With the services provided to tenants under the Home Care Program, as well as the Housing Authorities, involvement with local District Co-ordinating Committees, these types of services are becoming readily available in smaller projects.

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b) It is further recommended that the facilities associated with a Public Housing project in a centre be available to the elderly population at large.	b) Facilities in Public Housing projects are available to other Senior Citizens, however, the extent is dependent upon the discretion of the local Housing Authority and/or the tenant association.
c) Design	
8. a) It is recommended that future projects be under "one roof", as apartment or motel type units facilitate the mobility and social contact of senior citizens, because as a group they may experience a decline in mobility or functional ability over time.	8. a)-c) SHC has revised their policy of constructing apartments of no less than 20 units. An apartment has been designed which can be economically built containing as few as eight units which are all wheelchair accessible.
b) It is further recommended that new projects be located close to or integrated with required services.	Selection of an appropriate site is based upon the proximity of required services and transportation.
c) It is further recommended that they be designed so that an increasing number of suites and all communal facilities be wheelchair accessible.	
d) It is further recommended that safety features such as panic bars and railings be mandatory.	d) All seniors units have appropriate grab bars and railings installed
e) It is also recommended that all housing projects for senior citizens include a monitoring system to ensure a quick response to an elderly tenant should a need arise.	e) Various systems have been examined and several are being installed in projects on an experimental basis, e.g. Palliser Place, Regina.
9. The Task Force recommends that all units be constructed in a manner which would facilitate expansion at a later date if demand warrants.	9. This is complied with wherever possible due to physical limitations such as available land, however, this is not always possible.

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10. It is recommended that SHC examine the inclusion of amenities such as balconies in projects, whenever financially feasible, since many senior citizens spend much of their time within projects.

10. In apartment complexes, the majority are designed with amenities such as common community areas. In multi-storey projects, balconies are always considered and included wherever possible.

11. a) It is recommended that SHC examine different styles of housing to meet a broader range of senior citizen requirements, as the senior citizen group to be served by Public Housing is heterogeneous, as well as located in all areas of the province. Special design considerations may be required for northern Saskatchewan.

11. a) SHC has, as previously mentioned, expanded the range of housing forms to provide accommodation. In order to ensure that seniors have an opportunity to participate in the development process, the local Housing Authorities are now invited to assign a delegate to participate in both the development and construction phases of each project.

b) It is further recommended that SHC increase the proportion of two bedroom units in its projects to accommodate those wishing to share accommodation.

b) This recommendation is under further study. Increased ratio of two bedroom units was provided in several projects in 1984; as well as increased ratios being included in all enriched projects, experiments are being undertaken with layout design.

12. It is recommended that SHC give greater consideration to the climatic conditions of the province in planning its building projects especially in the provision of better insulation, storm doors and storm windows.

12. All building specifications have been extensively reviewed and upgraded. Special consideration to energy efficiency, as well as low cost maintenance features were addressed.

2. Home Repair

13. It is recommended that SHC assist the majority of the elderly who wish to remain in their own homes through continuation of the Senior Citizens Home Repair Program.

13. - 18. All recommendations accepted. The Senior Citizen Home Repair Program commenced August 1, 1984. Since the introduction of this program the Corporation has committed over 17,000 grants totalling $15,100,000.

14. It is recommended that the grant amount be raised to $1,000 and the amount be reviewed annually to keep pace with inflation.

15. The Task Force recommends that the income ceiling be set at $16,500 with a provision for annual review.

16. It is recommended that the program be provided year round.

17. It is recommended that SHC continue to provide an emergency repair option for those requiring immediate repairs.

18. It is recommended that SHC aim for a two week turn around for delivery of the Grant, in recognition of the financial constraints of applicants.

19. It is recommended that SHC create a registry system of contractors approved to do work under the program to protect applicants from unscrupulous contractors.

19. This recommendation was accepted in principle. However, due to the scope of the task, it could not be implemented.

    However, a registry of unscrupulous contractors is being maintained. The results have proven to be satisfactory and have achieved similar results.

20. It is recommended that SHC consider the use of local inspectors and other personnel who could be involved in the approval and supervision of the work done under the program.

20. SHC has enlisted the aid of all local municipal offices, Home Care Boards and Senior Citizen's Organizations in the delivery of this program. Actual inspections are completed by SHC personnel due to the technical requirements.

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3. Proposed Programs

21. It is recommended that SHC examine the possibility of providing incentives to encourgage the private sector, non-profit, and/or co-op housing to serve the needs of moderate income senior citizens.

21. SHC has provided 20% capital grants totalling $1,373,822 to Non-Profit groups in the construction of 118 units in 1984/85. The Department of Co-ops is continuing to promote the Continuing Co-operation Program.

22. a) It is recommended that the province test the Enriched Housing concept by proceeding with pilot projects at the earliest possible time, since a growing proportion of the elderly are in that 75 plus age bracket where they require the convenience and security of a limited amount of care and assistance.

22. a) In 1984, thirteen projects totalling 150 units of Enriched Housing were committed in the following communities and are currently nearing completion:

Balgonie - 10 units
Craik - 16 units
Grayson - 10 units
Norquay - 10 units
Redvers - 16 units
Springside - 12 units
Zenon Park - 10 units
Churchbridge - 12 units
Fort Qu'Appelle - 12 units
Milden - 10 units
Oxbow - 10 units
Shellbrook - 12 units
Theodore - 10 units

b) It is further recommended that in the testing of this concept, SHC, in conjunction with the Department of Health, examine a number of options which would locate projects covering the full continuum from fully independent living to nursing care on the same site.

b) To this point, a number of Enriched Housing projects have been constructed in close proximity to Special Care Homes. However, none have, as yet, been built adjoining to care facilities. Consideration of building joint facilities is under study with specific projects in Saskatoon and Regina under active consideration.

c) It is further recommended that SHC and the Department of Health encourage full community involvement in Enriched Housing projects and especially the use of volunteers.

c) Each community being considered for Enriched Housing has committed themselves to involvement in the provision of the necessary services required in this type of project.

4. Communications

23. It is recommended that SHC place greater efforts towards communicating its programs to the people, since many seniors indicated they were unaware of the program benefits they could receive.

23. SHC has made a concerted effort to communicate its programs and services to Senior Citizens. These efforts have included:

- Establishing full service Regional Offices in Saskatoon and Prince Albert;
- Electronic and Print Media Advertising;
- Radio and Television talk shows and interviews;
- Public meetings;
- Regional Workshops
- Conferences and Seminars;
- Introduction of Toll Free telephone numbers;
- Distributing program information to:
  - Municipal Offices;
  - Home Care Boards;
  - All Senior Citizens Associations and Groups;
- Assisting in the publication of the Directory of Services to Seniors distributed to each senior household in the province.

24. It is recommended that the province place greater emphasis upon co-ordination of its senior citizen programming, and ensure that Seniors Intergovernmental Co-ordinating Council on Aging (SICCOA) be given a stronger mandate, because the province provides a wide variety of prgramming to senior citizens and many of these programs overlap in that they provide aid to the same elderly person.

24. SHC continues to be represented on SICCOA. This committee has been looking into a number of areas of concern to Seniors and co-ordinating the efforts of the various agencies involved.

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5. General

25. The Task Force in its deliberations encountered a number of ideas which deserve further consideration and study.

It is therefore recommended that SHC explore the following:

a) examine mortgage participation programs for seniors;

b) approaches to senior citizen services taken in other countries; and

c) a range of housing options:

- Granny Suites, independent living units near or in family homes to encourage family involvement in providing aid to the elderly;
- portable units to serve temporary housing demand in small centres;
- co-operative housing for moderate income seniors;
- condominium housing for moderage income seniors;
- conversion of existing non-profit units for moderate income households for the use of senior citizens, on a non-profit or rent geared to income basis;
- renovation of existing buildings;
- hostels for "old boys". The growth of this group may be an emerging social problem;

25. SHC has been reviewing the various program options and incentives detailed by the Task Force.

The recommendation concerning the conversion of existing non-profit orginally designed for moderate income households to housing for low income senior citizens has been acted upon in three centres on a pilot basis. The projects located in the Regina Cornwall Centre, Coronach and Frontier have or are currently being modified to accommodate Senior Citizens.

- Mortgage programs and other housing option programs are under active review at the present time.

- Meetings regarding hostel facilities for "old boys" are currently being held with the appropriate agencies.

6. Other Departments

26. It is recommended that the province build greater numbers of Non-Profit Nursing Home Beds, because waiting lists for special care facilities have grown significantly and continue to do so.	26. Representation was made to the Department of Health concerning the shortage of Special Care Beds. In order to assist the Department of Health, SHC has reallocated 1985 budget to Section 56.1 Non-Profit to allow for increased construction of Special Care Beds.